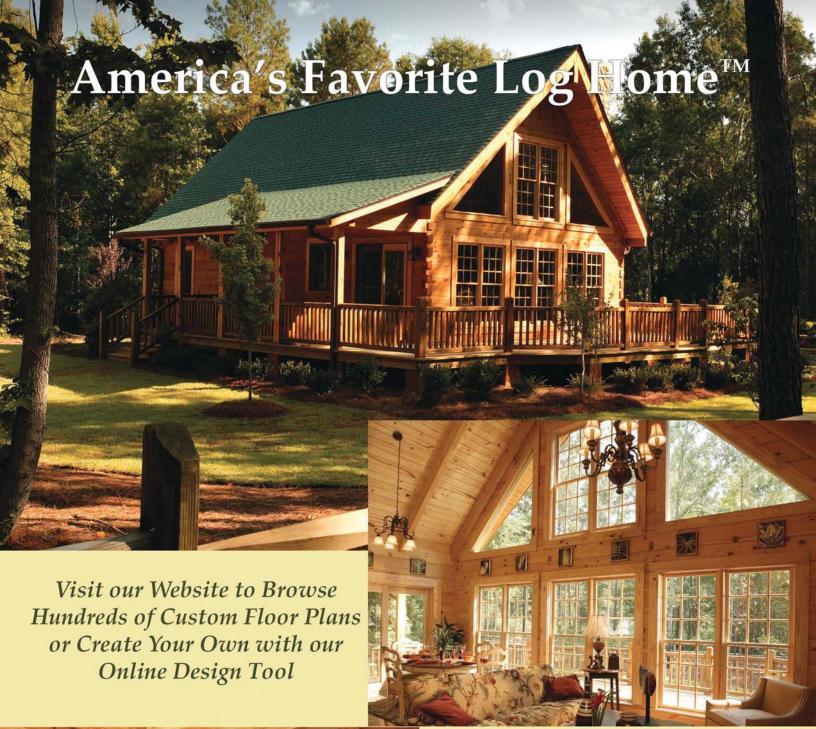
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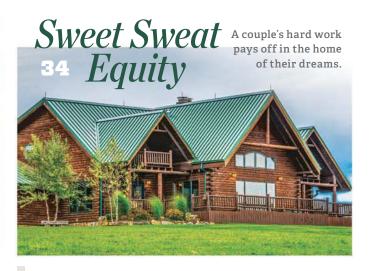
A Montana home enjoys a view. PHOTO COURTESY: Pioneer Log Homes

#### SEPTEMBER 2015



dining spots

Plain or fancy, meals are always served up in style in a log home.

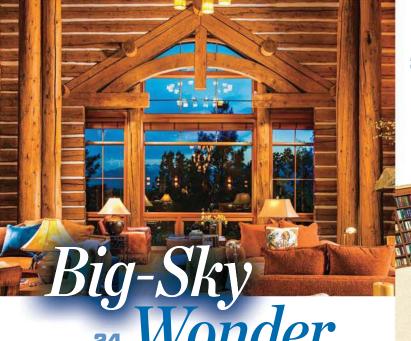


#### also in this issue

- 8 Editor's Letter
- **68** Regional Resource Guide
- **82** Free-Information Guide
- 83 Handcrafters' Gallery
- 84 Builder/Dealer Marketplace

13 pages of popular plans,

- 86 Products & Services
- 88 Show Us



A Montana home showcases splendid scenery and a novel log look.

39FLOOR PLANS starting on page 46 40

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# Cedar for the price of pine.



## LOG HOME UNIVERSITY

60 **PLAN** 

61 SITE RIGHT

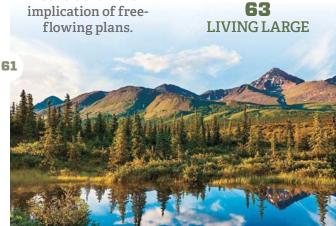
62 ASK **PROFESSOR** 

ROB Why build a log home?

Consider all the

**HIDING IN** 

THE OPEN



64

BUILD

### **GLASS ACT**

Building a sunroom can enrich your log-home experience.

GO WITH THE FLOW

66 DON'T FEAR **SHRINKAGE** 

67 WHAT DETERMINES THE COST OF LOGS?





# 68 STYLE

### **BRIGHT IDEAS**

Lighting boosts a log home's interior looks, utility and comfort.





69 ADD STYLE TO YOUR KITCHEN

# **70**GRAND ENTRANCE

Make your first impression count with a welcoming entryway like this one.



# **72**MAINTAIN

#### **EASY LOG CARE**

3 steps to prepare your home for the long winter ahead.

**73**WARNING SIGNS

**74**LOG FIX-ITS:
DIY OR PRO?

**75**RANDY THE HANDYMAN

What's the biggest challenge to furnishing a log home?



# **76** FINISHING TOUCHES

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# MAINTAIN CHANGE

quarter-century ago, log-home care seemed stable. Coal tar was history, and what coatings

and preservatives companies offered seemed to work. Then came borates.

The borate buzz drew me to "The First International Conference on Wood Protection with Diffusible Preservatives," held in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1990. I didn't know what "diffusible preservatives" were, but I perceived as the conference unfolded that it was about borates.

Borates are a natural, mined mineral, familiar as ingredients in detergents (20 Mule Team Borax), contact lens cleaner and a host of commercial and industrial products. As a preservative, borates penetrate wood and prevent decay fungi and insect infestation, without changing wood's color. Borates have been used extensively for wood preservation for decades in Australia, Asia and Europe, but the United States initially rejected them. By the time borates were shown to be toxic to termites and effective for long-term protection of wood buildings, Americans protected structures against subterranean termites with chlorinated insecticides (chlordane, banned since 1988). Also, abundant wood resources made long-term decay prevention a low-priority. That was the observation of presenter Lonnie Williams, an entomologist with the USDA Forest Service whose research included development of borate treatment for wood protection and who was co-chair of the conference.

To those titles, add prophet. Although Williams cautioned that borates weren't perfect and that more research was needed, they soon revolutionized log-home care.

Wood care has long advanced, whether dealing with volatile organic compounds or applying field-test results to reformulate products. Field tests used to mean coat a piece of wood and leave it outside to see what happens. It's more sophisticated now. The most influential results, so far as log homes are concerned, come from actual experience. Thirty years of product application and development show themselves in existing log homes. Observations have led to improvements that increase products' effectiveness and extend time between reapplication.

The latter is especially important, given people's tendency to postpone maintenance. It isn't just log homes. We've all seen wood-clad homes badly in need of re-painting. It's difficult to imagine a log-home owner procrastinating, however, because of the spread of knowledge about maintenance and the fact that if a log home is something you've aspired to own for years and worked hard to achieve, why wouldn't you do everything you could to care for it?

You owe it to yourself and to your logs to take full advantage of improved maintenance products to protect your investment. A log home has the potential to last hundreds of years. Don't squander the opportunity to fulfill its destiny.

ROLAND SWEET

Editor-in-Chief

## ASK THE EDITOR

# Can log-home companies design the homes they sell?

Most definitely. A big advantage is that a log-home company will design a home that can be built using logs. Not all designers are familiar with the opportunities and challenges of this building material. Most log-home companies work off stock plans of previous homes, using computer-drafting programs to make modifications that you request. But even loghome companies that employ architects who create innovative custom designs aren't going to present plans that are structural fantasy. The design work will most likely be included in your log-package price. If not, you'll pay only a nominal fee. You may even buy a set of plans from one company to take to another to cut your logs.

Got a question you need answered? Ask away!

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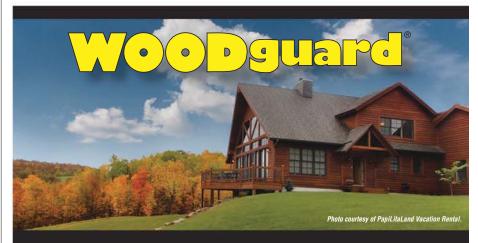
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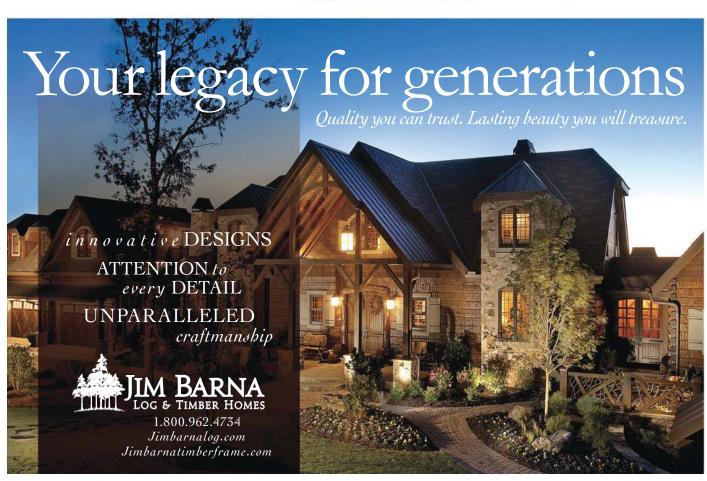
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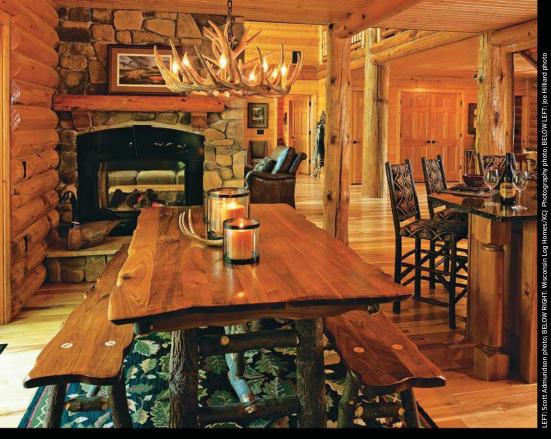
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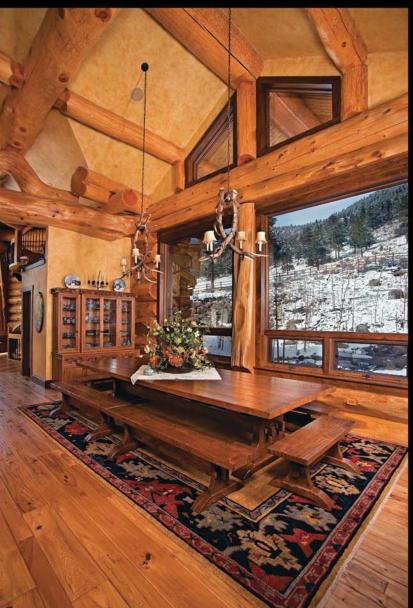








Lighten the Mood. The informality of log homes negates the need for fancy furniture but does dictate it be topped off with a prominent lighting fixture. Style — plain or fancy — doesn't matter. What does is that you design your dining area to take into account that whatever hanging lighting you choose, it should be centered over the dining table. That means planning where it will hang from. Beams are popular spots, but they aren't movable, and because of the symmetry principle, neither is the table, which also must conform to the scale of its space.













✓ Appearance ✓ Longevity ✓ Value ✓ Environment

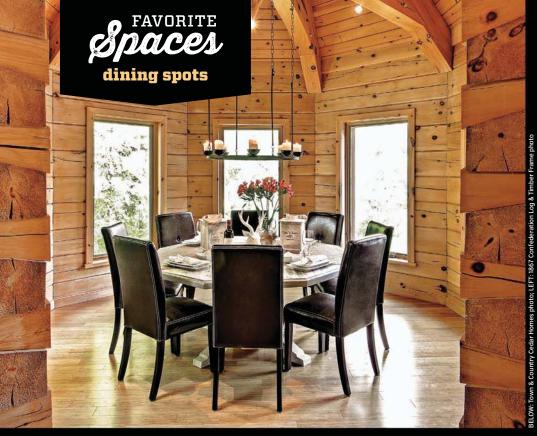


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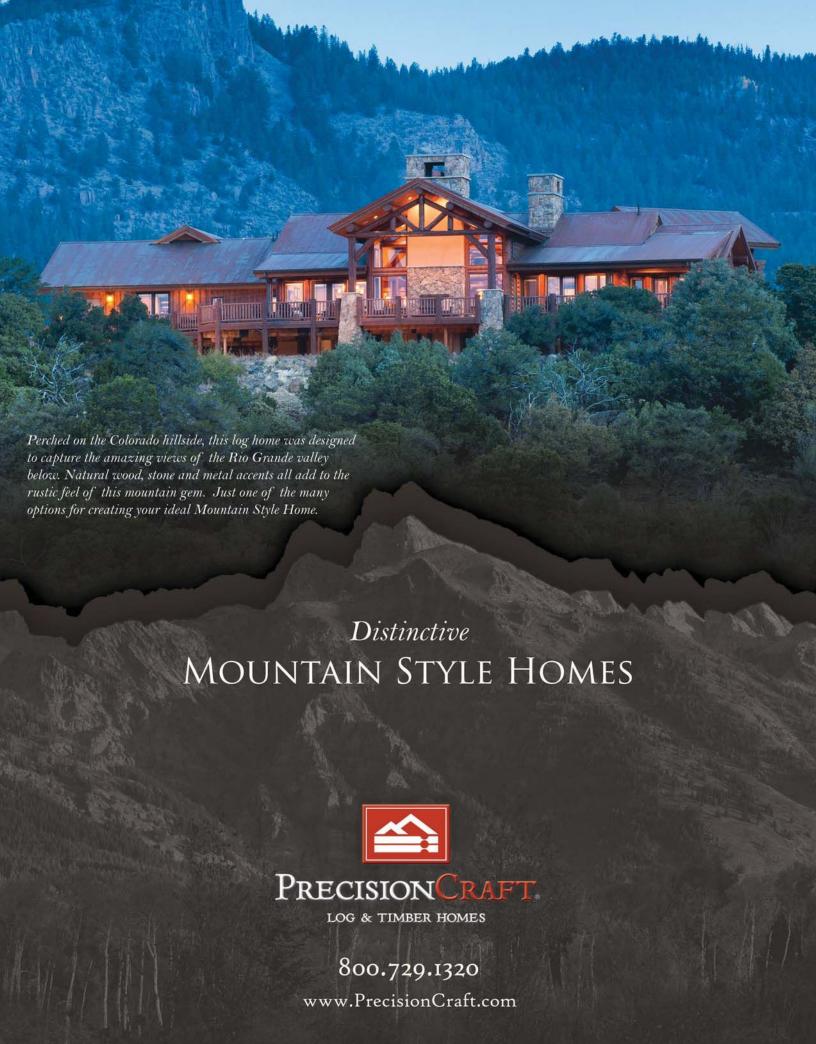


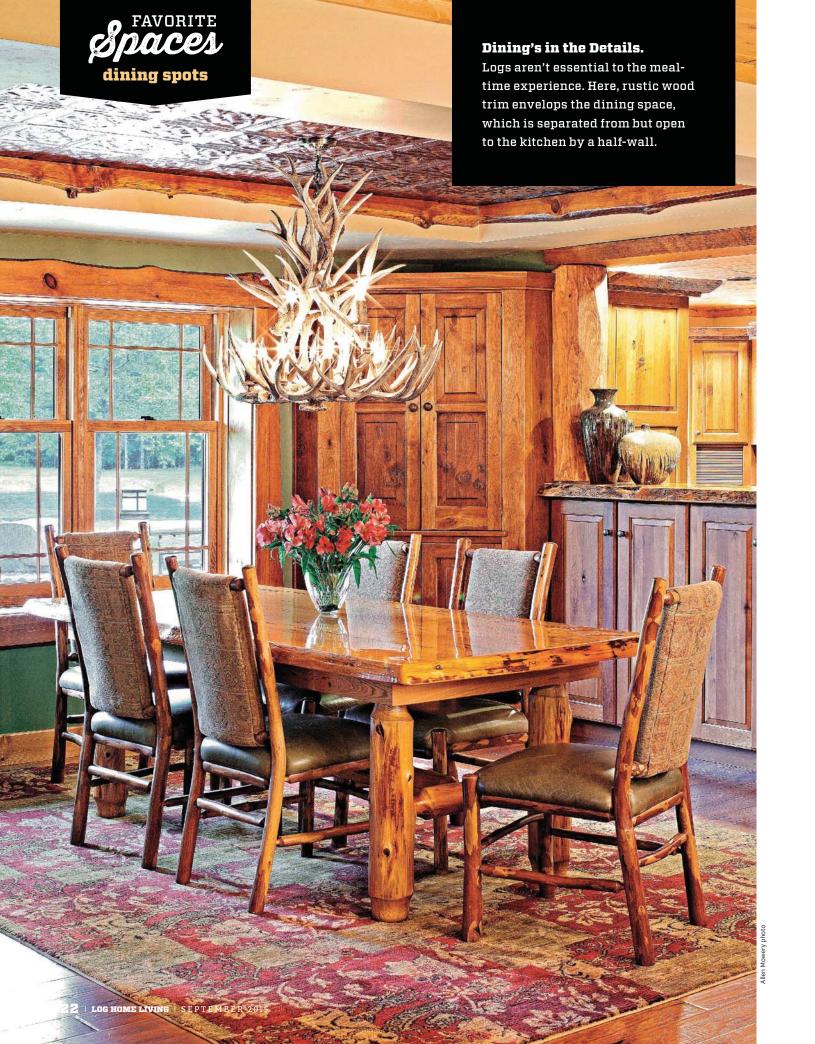




Taste the View. Bumping out your log walls to create a dedicated dining room can surround you with logs on more sides while opening up view opportunities all around the table, so that no matter where people sit, they're able to look outside. The top setting showcases flat-hewn logs and dovetail corners between the windows. By contrast, the room below is awash in light and relies on darker wood furniture to provide contrast with the white cedar walls and overhead beams, and to create a more formal setting.









The best years of my life have been with friends and family in the mountains of Southern California. A world away in just a couple hours. Leaving behind the hustle and bustle of the city, you're among the trees, animals, blue sky, and fresh air. I got this love of the outdoors from my dad. He had an old cabin right by Lake Arrowhead on the edge of the National Forest....

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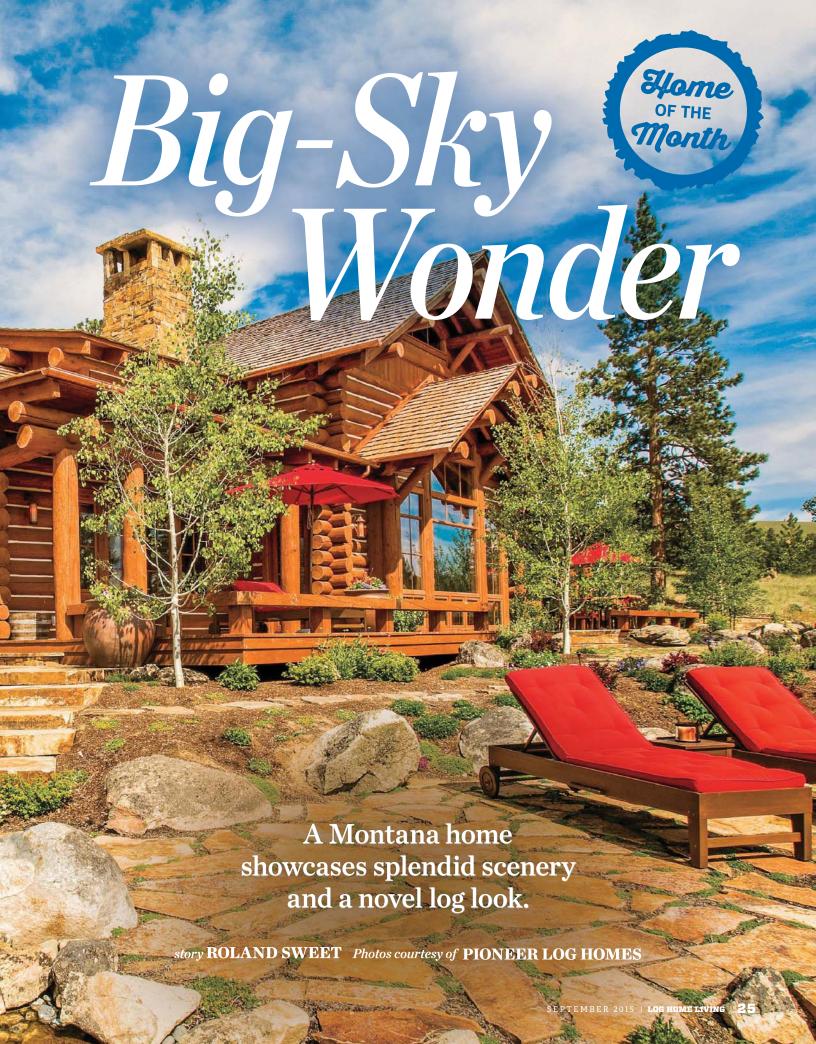












o say this log home fulfills a lifelong dream is no exaggeration. Californians Karen and Tom spent their early years together backpacking and camping in the Rockies and realized there was where they wanted to build a vacation home. They imagined different looks and layouts over the years, and held on to their dream. About 25 years ago, they began searching in earnest for the right location, somewhere, as Tom says, "out of the crowd."

They eventually learned about a Montana resort called the Stock Farm Club. When they saw it, they said, "Wow, this is the place." They joined as nonowners to benefit from abundant recreational amenities but after tiring of hauling their bags back and forth from California to a rented home, they bought an 11-acre lot to build their dream at last.

They favored logs because they'd visited several log homes and loved the different, close feeling. Even more, they valued logs' permanence. "We wanted a house that would last centuries and be passed down through the generations," Tom says.

The formal design process began with architect Jeremy Oury, whose Kibo Group had designed many of the Stock Farm homes. They appealed to Tom and Karen, who contributed their own photos and ideas, "We knew the basic elements," Tom says. "A place for us, a den for each of us, a nice bedroom for a master suite for us and room for guests." The design unfolded — only it didn't work out quite as planned.

The design suited their lot, but they wanted to be on hand during the home's construction. So they rented a 20-year-old house on 137 acres right next to the Stock Farm. "We realized why in the heck would we want to build where







there's a community association and close-by neighbors, when we could buy this lot, which was for sale," Tom says.

Since they already had a design, they figured they'd simply move it from the smaller lot to the bigger one. It wasn't that simple. "We ended up modifying and expanding it," Tom says. "The site overlooks the entire Bitterroot Valley, for example, so we wanted to enlarge the window area to take advantage of better views and add height to the rooms. It remained basically a three-bedroom house, but all the dimensions increased and the way we oriented the home toward the view changed."

With room to spread out, the design for what was to have been a 3,000-square-foot house more than

doubled in size. It didn't sprawl, however, and apportioned interior space comfortably. Besides accommodating their lifestyle, the plan, which was two years in the making, eventually won an excellence in design award from the national Log Homes Council.

For their logs, Karen and Tom had plenty of choices. The Bitterroot Valley is a log-building hub. After realizing that Pioneer Log Homes, located in nearby Hamilton, provided the Stock Farm homes they liked best, they chose it. They wanted big, handcrafted logs but with a twist: peeled round on the outside and hewn flat on the inside. The resulting D-shape profile is common for milled-log homes but rare for handcrafted ones. "It was a no-brainer,"

Tom says. "Karen and I both love art and hate dust, so the flat walls accommodated both our wishes."

Pioneer crews cut and fitted the 16-inch-diameter logs, salvaged from a forest fire, at their yard, then took them apart and delivered them to the couple's site, which is located a mile from the nearest road, assuring them the privacy the craved. To allow the log trucks access, the couple had to build a bridge over an irrigation ditch.

Chinking seals the space between the logs, which feature saddle-notched corners. Complementing the logs are arched timber trusses. Round-log columns, standing nearly 30 feet tall, support the interior openness and add grandeur. The home also incorporates lots of stone, including massive rocks for the living-room fireplace — fitted together "like a giant jigsaw puzzle," Karen says – ledge stone for the chimneys, and colorful imported granite for the kitchen and bathroom countertops. The floor is 200-year-old reclaimed oak; cedar shakes top the roof.

Karen and Tom chose General One of Whitefish to build the home, with former owner Wyatt Perkins serving as the general contractor. Living only a hundred yards away, the couple visited the site at least twice a day. Even though the house was planned in great detail, once it started going up, the construction crew began envisioning greater possibilities and suggested changes, most of which Karen and Tom approved. "That happened hundreds of time during construction," Tom says. "Fortunately, we had a cost-plus contract."

Construction lasted three years. Besides the structure itself, the home, dubbed the Tunken, from a favorite expression of Tom's grandmother, extends the living space outdoors, with porches off the study and the kitchen, an outside fireplace and a pergola made from rustic logs.

Because of the home's scale, Tom and Karen had many furniture pieces made to order. They supplemented those with items acquired on their travels. Central to the decor is the couple's art. To showcase some of their collection, the home has a dedicated gallery that runs from the master suite to the fover.

The finishing touches distinguish the home even further from the typical image of a log home. It's so extraordinary that the producers of the Discovery Channel's "Epic Log Homes" featured it. Interviewed for the show, the couple revealed that their first propane bill was \$6,600, to heat the home for 45 days. They immediately invested \$89,000 for



solar panels to reduce their reliance on propane. After the retrofit, their next propane bill was only \$440.

Since completing the home, Tom and Karen found that it so enriched their lives, they've made it their primary residence. Set amid spectacular surroundings, their dream, inspired by the mountains they've loved since their younger days, has brought them full circle. •

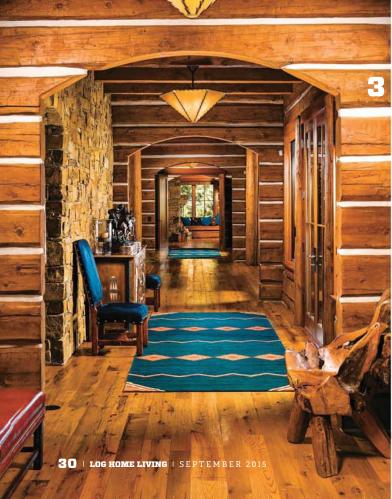
**ABOVE:** The well-equipped kitchen features a stone archway leading to the gallery. Colorful imported granite graces the countertop. Big timber beams form the ceiling.

**OPPOSITE:** The roomy dining room is surrounded by windows on three sides to enhance the view. Perimeter seating fills the space, while the 200-year-old oak floors ground it.

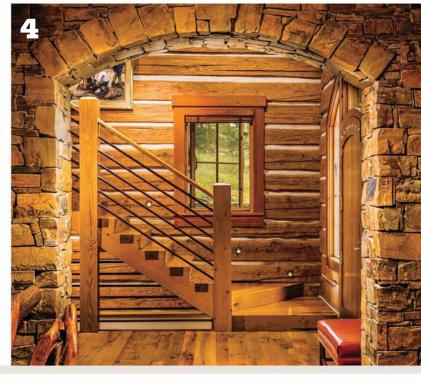
# floor plan

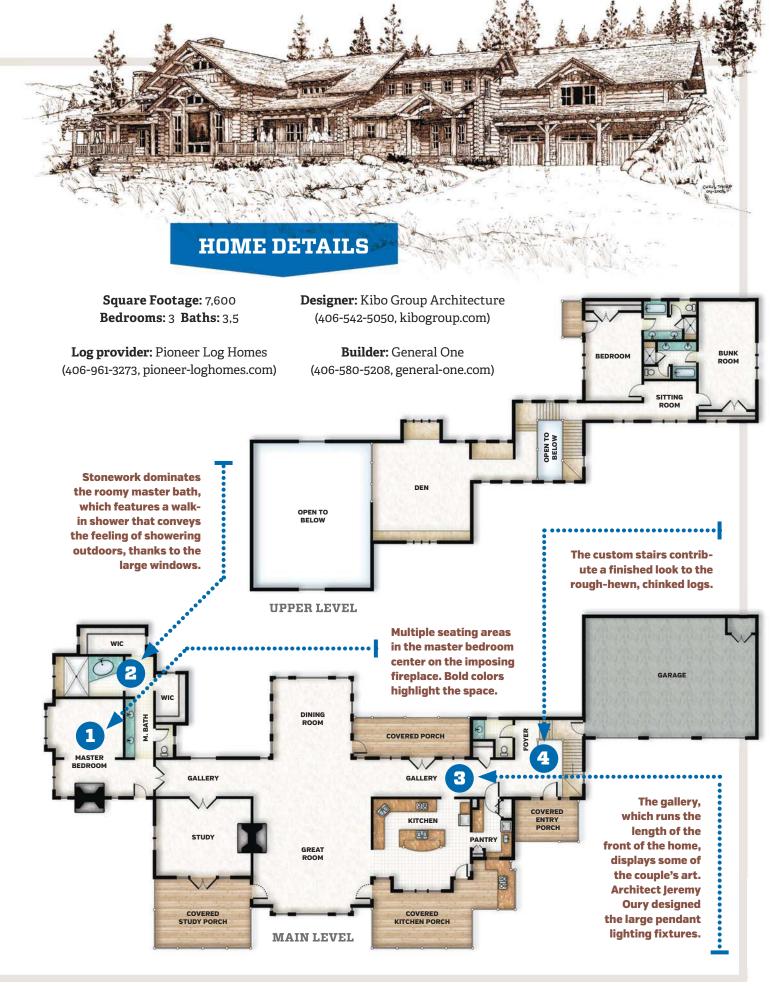


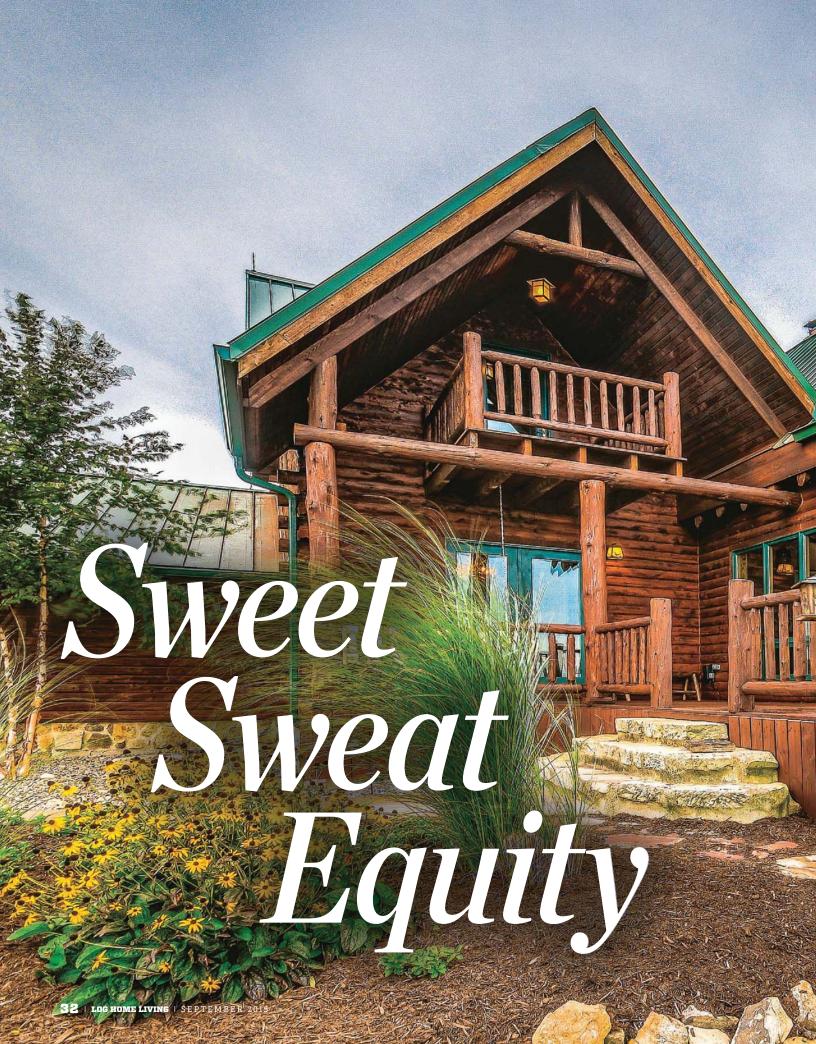


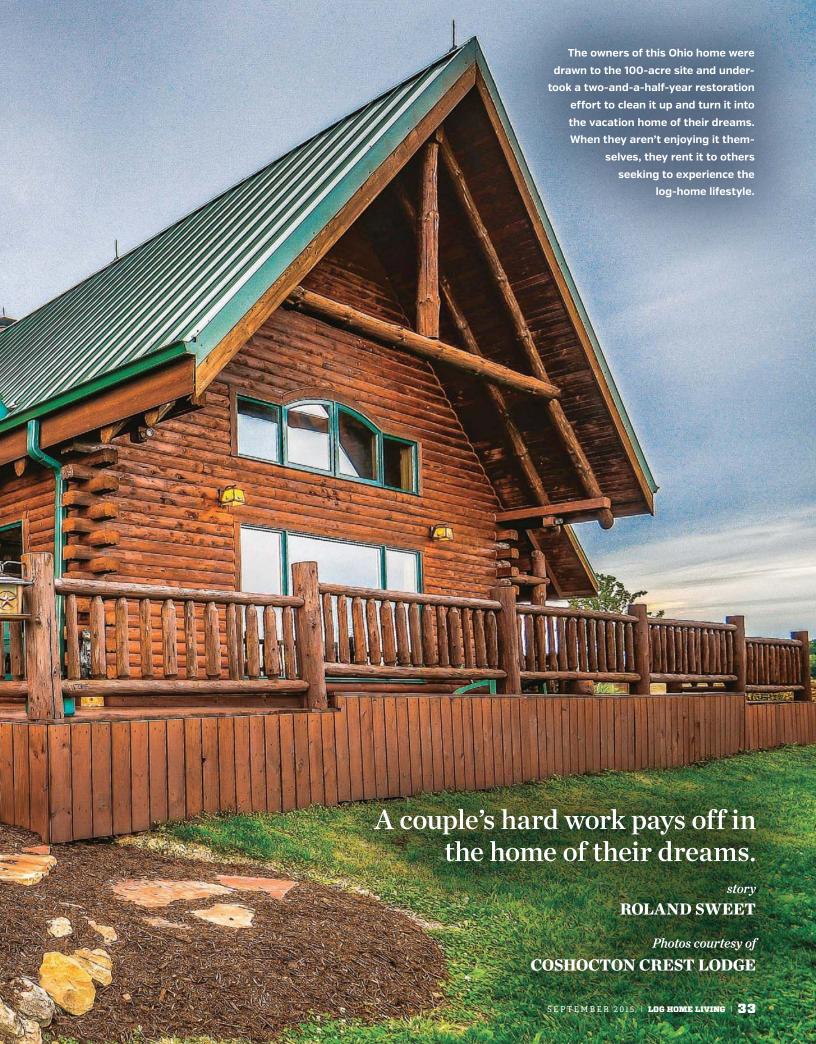
















**ABOVE:** The lodge-style living room has a vaulted ceiling, a two-story fireplace with pine long mantel and floor-to-ceiling picture windows.

LEFT: The well-equipped kitchen features top-of-the-line stainless steel appliances, handcrafted birch cabinets and granite atop the counters and breakfast bar.

TOP RIGHT: In the dining area, an Amish-built cherry wood table and chairs seat a crowd. The space opens to the front deck cedar swing.



ew people build their own log home these days, but some relish fixing up old ones. Mike and Chelsea Palubiak are two of those people.

The Ohio couple bought their log home in 2011, intending it for weekends and vacations. It had been built a dozen years earlier but was obviously neglected and sat vacant for two years. "It looked scary," Mike recalls, adding the logs were sturdy and undamaged, just dirty.

Its overall dilapidated look made it available at a bargain price. Much work needed doing. "It was a challenge, to say the least," Mike recalls. "From the very second we purchased it, we realized just how much work was ahead of us, but we viewed it as a labor of love. We have always dreamed of owning a log cabin."

The 7,000-square-foot home is perched high on a hill in southern Ohio, on 100 acres. "We both can remember how the view from the top took our breath away the first time we saw it," Mike says, "and even today we are in awe of the sunsets, sunrises and the view."

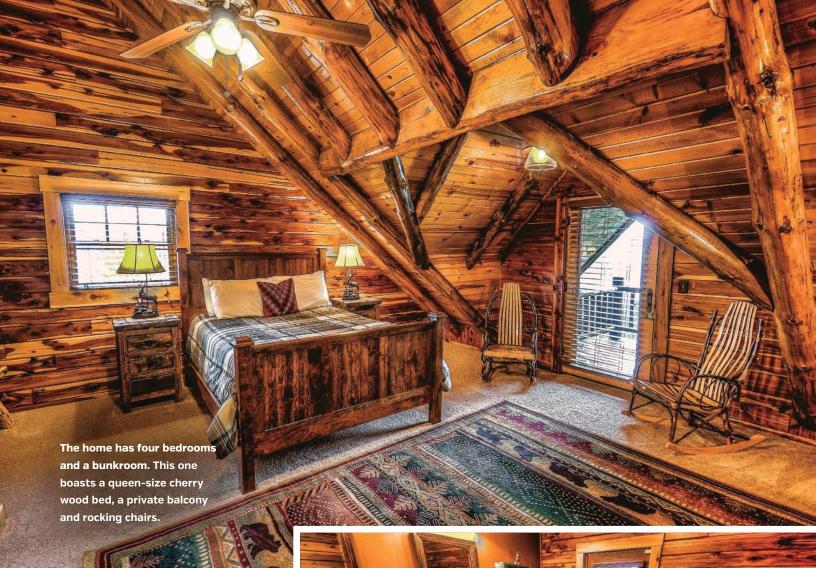
Restoration lasted two and a half years. The couple cleaned and restained all the logs and replaced some log posts on the front deck. "My background is pressure washing and restoration," Mike says. "We do a lot of decks, cedar homes and even some log homes. So that helped out."

They concerned themselves primarily with cosmetics, organization and design aspects. For the log work and heavy construction, they found help online: Lawton Brock of Brandywine Construction & Restoration (330-204-5092, brandywinellc.com).

Inside, Mike says they spent "about 500 man hours cleaning out the dust and spiders." The original owners had applied one coat of polyurethane but unevenly. "We sanded the logs down to smooth the poly, then applied mineral spirits, then applied another coat of polyurethane, then sanded that and applied a final coat of poly to make the logs look good," Mike says.

Once the home was restored to a livable condition, Mike and Chelsea began making it their own. "We started by converting the large attached garage into a beautiful family room," Mike says. "After that, we finished the basement, which we designed to include a theater room, arcade room and western saloon. We also added some stonework and vaulted the garage ceiling."

They also revamped the water system,



converting from well water to an environmentally friendly rainwater system. Beyond the home itself, they've added two large barns and an outdoor pavilion with fireplace. "It's just been nonstop with all the projects we've been doing," Mike says. "We weren't expecting to do so much, but one thing led to another. I had so much fun doing it that I just kept going."

The couple lives about 90 minutes away and visits at least once a month. "It has been a long journey, but one that we have truly enjoyed every second of," Mike says. "Every now and then, we look around and cannot believe that we are blessed to own such a place. It reminds us of what is important, and since the purchase, we have enjoyed many milestones and celebrations within those walls."

**SEE FOR YOURSELF** 

**ABOVE:** One of four bathrooms, this one features twin vanities with copper basins, tile floor and tub surround, and a pleasing mix of wood and drywall.

The Palubiaks make their restored log cabin available to others eager to experience staying in a log home. Rates start at \$845 a night for up to six people. If you're interested, find details at coshoctoncrestlodge.com.



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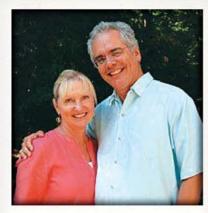
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REAL PEOPLE. REAL SOLUTIONS.



The Polowniaks



The Trumbles



The Vilims

40

## **CONNECTIONS**

The couple bought a lakeside lot and want a home with outdoor spaces that extend an invitation to passersby on the water. DOOMY DETREAT

## **ROOMY RETREAT**

Rita and Casey are replacing an old fishing cabin with a home to take advantage of river views and connect to the outdoors.

44

## **HOLIDAY HOME**

Thanksgiving is the family's favorite holiday. They dream of a home that will accommodate everyone in comfort.

PLUS: A 13-page gallery of popular floor plans

connections

# A Place to Gather and Enjoy the Lake

rowing up, Shawn Polowniak loved spending time at his grandparents' log cabin. "No matter how busy and crazy life was," Shawn remembers, "it was about reconnecting." He and Rebecca purchased a lakeside site just an hour from their full-time home in Kansas City that would be a place for their family to gather.

**Why a log home:** The log cabin of Shawn's childhood inspired the couple's log-home dream.

Most important features: The Polowniaks' steep site boasts soaring views out over the water – something their home design needed to take advantage of. They wanted outdoor spaces that would extend an invitation to passersby – both on the road and the water – to stop in for a drink or a cook-out. "In my opinion, you almost can't have a log cabin without having a wood-burning fireplace," Shawn says.



The Polowniaks

## The Lowdown

The couple worked with Remington Brown of StoneMill Log Homes to customize a plan that would provide lake views and plenty of room to entertain inside and out.

Moving the stairs to a bumped-out "tower" means they don't interrupt the wide-open





Main Level

## The Inside Scoop

The Polowniaks' custom-home design turned out so well that Stonemill Log Homes decided to include it in the company's catalog of stock plans and then asked Shawn to name it. He chose "Rose Hill." in honor of his wife's middle name and the hillside location of their home. Want to give your log home a name? Here is some inspiration:

- CHECK OLD MAPS OF YOUR AREA. The British website housenameheritage.com suggests researching historic records to discover former landmarks or residents that could be incorporated into a new name.
- **BE ORIGINAL.** Do a quick survey of your neighborhood or community to make sure you aren't copying some other nearby home's name.
- **USE YOUR LOCATION.** House names like "Buena Vista," "Water's Edge" and "The Birches" take a cue from their natural surroundings.
- TAP INTO YOUR INTERESTS. Love to ski, golf, cook, read or collect stamps? Make it public with a home name that plays off your hobby.

roomy retreat

## Replacing an Old Cabin

oving to the Wisconsin Dells represents a homecoming for Rita and Casey Trumble. They both grew up in Wisconsin and are looking forward to retiring to the area. They purchased a lot with 160 feet of riverfront and an existing fishing camp where they could build a retreat to enjoy all year around.

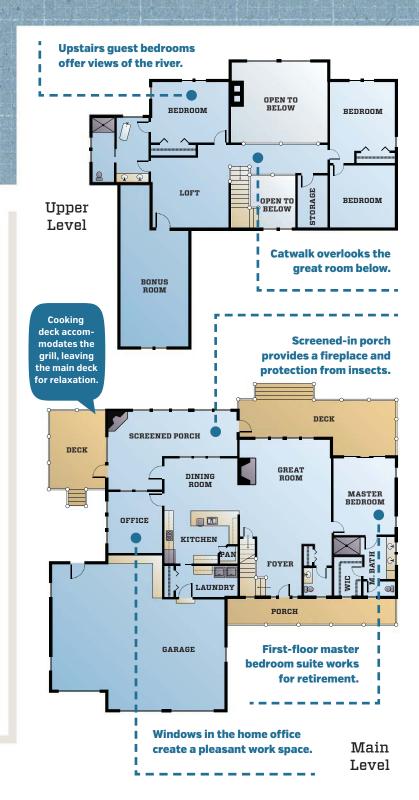
Why a log home: Casey says he and his wife enjoy the "warmth, charm and appeal" of logs, but they wanted to have some variety for their home's interior look.

Most important features: The Trumbles planned to tear down the old cabin on the

> lot and replace it with a home that takes advantage of their river views and allows them to entertain family and friends. The couple enjoys hiking, birding and paddle sports, so connecting their new home to the outdoors was key.



The Trumbles

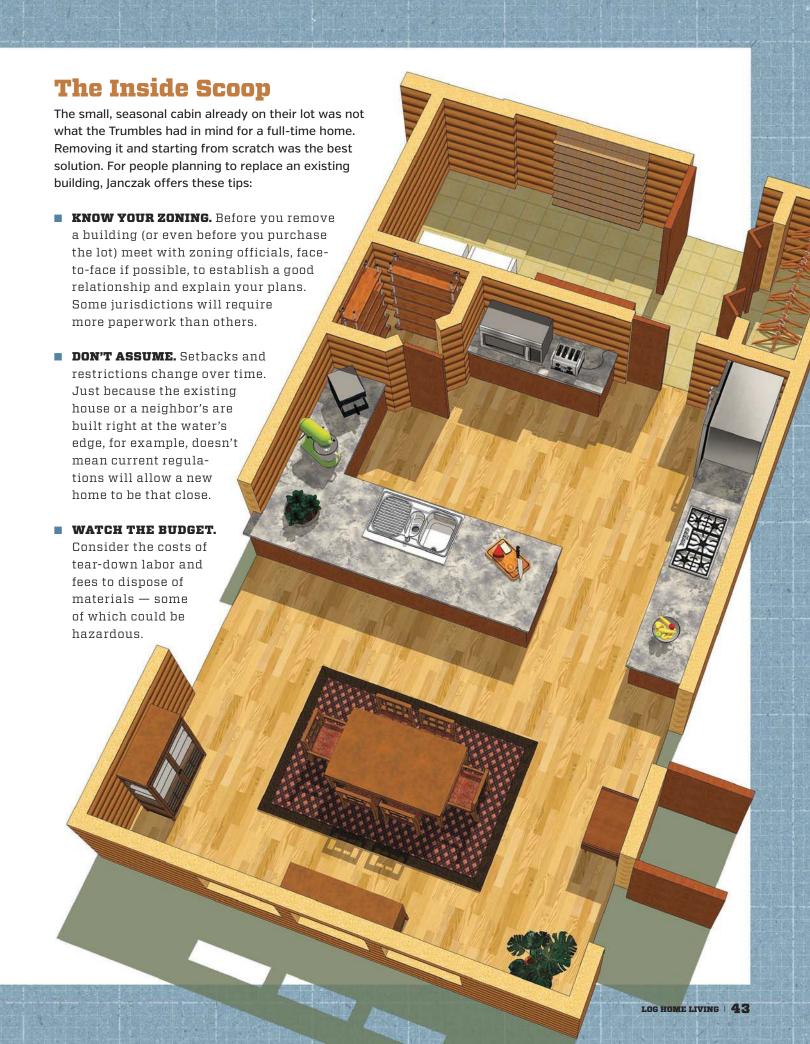


## **PLAN SPECS**

**Square Footage:** 3,027 Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 2.5

## The Lowdown

The Trumbles chose Wisconsin Log Homes, in Green Bay, to provide their home package, which features conventional wall construction sided with half-logs on the exterior. Inside, a mix of half-logs, drywall and knotty pine line the walls. The company's Nate Janczak designed a layout that would capture views from the great room, screened-in porch, master bedroom and guest rooms.



## **FLOOR PLANS**

holiday home

## A Place to Offer Thanks

eople build homes for all kinds of reasons.
Laurie and Glen Vilim wanted a place specifically to gather with their children and extended family for Thanksgiving. When their search for an existing home came up empty, the couple decided to buy 14 acres of land in eastern Pennsylvania and build from scratch.

**Why a log home:** We fell in love with the feel of log homes," Laurie says. She and Glen appreciate the natural look of log construction and the smell of wood.

**Most important features:** Plenty of space to host a crowd was at the top of the Vilims' must list. The home should feel comfortable and warm with room for large groups of friends and family to gather together. They wanted their hillside home to face west, looking out over beautiful mountain sunset views.

## The Lowdown

While the home is a vacation retreat for now, the Vilims hope one day to live there full-time. Jack Mundy of Estemerwalt Log Homes says the design offers plenty of living and entertaining space, while keeping all the essentials on the first floor. A catwalk over the great room connects the upstairs bedrooms and enhances the home's soaring volume. An expansive finished basement offers space for entertaining adults and kids, as well as a workshop.

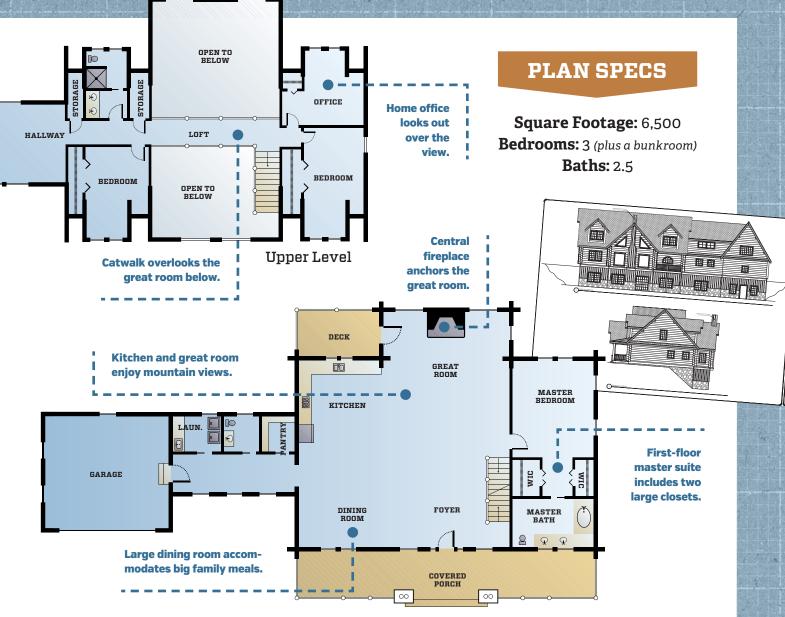


The Vilims

Bunkroom over the garage accommodates plenty of overnight guests.

BUNKROOM





## The Inside Scoop

The Vilim family made a weekly trip to their home site while it was under construction. "We were able to catch some design issues," Laurie says. What's the best way to monitor progress on your construction site? The Vilims' builder, Dave Lester of Lester Log Homes, offers these tips:

- VISIT THE SITE WHEN YOU CAN. Your feedback is important to your general contractor. If you see something that concerns you, talk to your GC before too much additional work is done.
- **ASK FOR PHOTOS.** If you can't be on-site, your GC may be able to send you photo updates of

#### Main Level

the work. Smartphone cameras and texting make it easy for owners to track a project's progress.

- FINE-TUNE YOUR PLAN. The more detailed your plan, the clearer it will be to your builder and crew. If you are building a long way from your primary home, try to make firm decisions before construction begins, Lester says.
- LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH. Unless you've talked to your GC in advance about taking on some of the work yourself, you don't need to help the crew. Lester welcomes homeowners on the job site, but prefers they take a handsoff approach during their visits.



#### **Stoney Creek**

This charming home is part of our rustic series and offers an open floor plan, first floor master suite and great use of space and energy efficiency. Second story bedrooms, loft area and porches complete the overall design. Family and guests alike will enjoy the livability of this home for years to come.

**Bedrooms: 3** Baths: 2

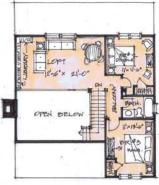
**Square Footage: 1,530** 

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First Floor

**Second Floor** 



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**Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 3.5** 

**Square Footage: 2,464** 

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First Floor



Second Floor

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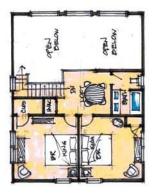


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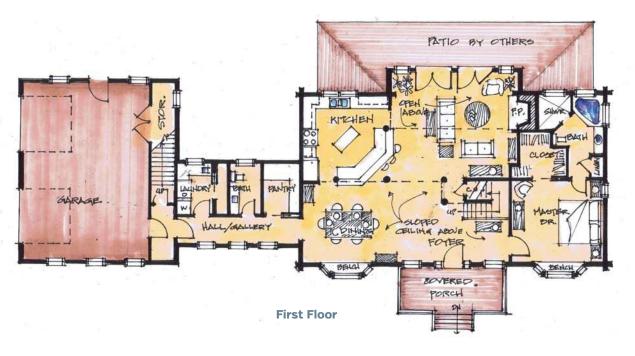
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## Meadowbrook

3,443 Square Feet, 3 Bed, 2.5 Bath



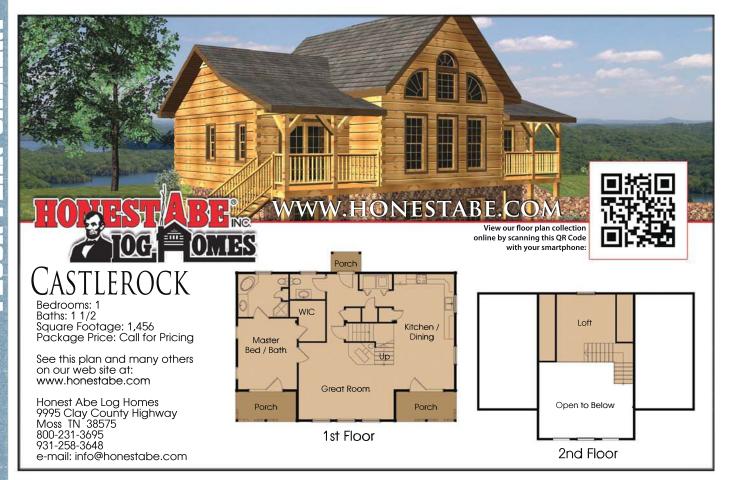
**Second Floor** 

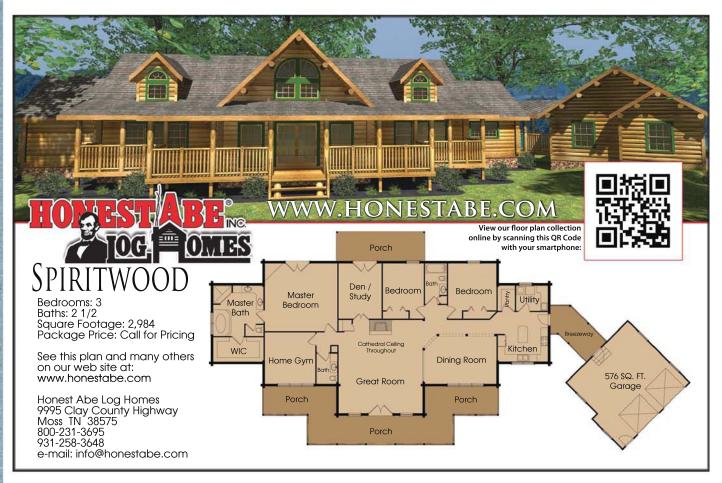




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1 Bed, 1 Den, 1 1/2 Baths





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57th Patriot, Military, Police, Firefighters, Life NRA receive bonus. AR-15 Rifle or Freeze Dried Food with every package - inquire.

**Bedrooms: 3** Baths: 2

Square Footage: 2,348 (optional lower level 1,872)

**Liberty Log Cabins Southern Missouri** 417-531-5729 www.logs.net







**Second Floor** 

## Liberty **Log Cabins**

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**Bedrooms: 2** Baths: 2

Square Footage: 1,852 (optional lower level 1,852)

**Liberty Log Cabins** Southern Missouri 417-531-5729 www.logs.net





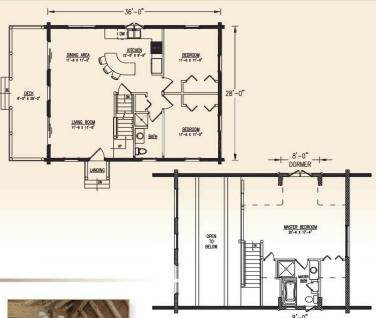


## Welcome Home!

## ► Lafayette I

Cape Style, 1,484 square feet, 3 Bedrooms/2 Baths





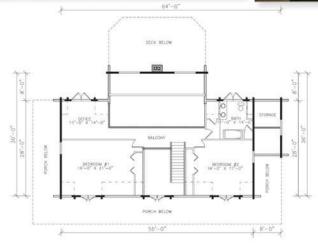
► Hunts Mountain Lodge
Cape Style, 2,950 square feet, 3 Bedrooms/2.5 Baths

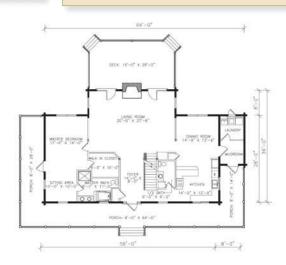




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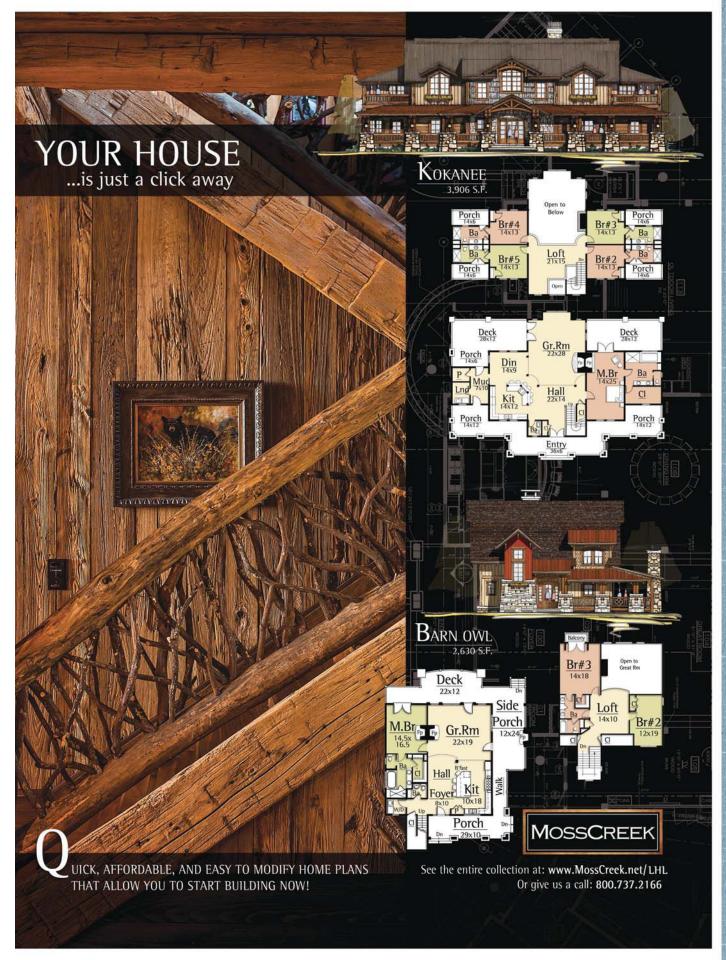






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## The Silverado

This 3 bedroom, 2 bath, award-winning cabin combines a unique twist of traditional and modern styles. Its design maximizes the use of space and allows for a private getaway in the master suite. A shed dormer covers the rear of the home allowing for plenty of headroom and additional natural light. Two gable dormers grace the front, not only adding floor space to the home but, giving the home the traditional cabin feel. The spacious wraparound porch gives plenty of outdoor living areas to enjoy. The "Silverado" received the "Cabin of the Year" award from Field & Stream Magazine. Available in Cedar, Cypress or Pine and a variety of log profiles this home will truly serve your family and friends every need.

**Bedrooms: 3** Baths: 2

Square Footage: 2,184 Package Price: Call for prices

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**First Floor Second Floor** 

# The LOG HOME UNIVERSITY

An Owner's Manual









**Furnishings** 

for your log

home.

**p.76** 

60

BUILD

64

68

STYLE

**MAINTAIN** 

PLAN

Open layouts are all

the rage, but they

might not be right

for your home.

Adding a sunroom to your home can reward you with

Well-planned lighting can boost your home's looks and livability.

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greater comfort.



HIDING IN THE OPEN

Consider all the implication of free-flowing plans. By Mercedes Hayes

pen floor plans are all the rage in real estate these days, from old houses to new log homes. Even center-hall Colonials have made an attempt to follow the trend, by adjoining a kitchen to a breakfast room and family room. Other people have something more extreme in mind, such as one big room resembling warehouse loft space.

Well, stop right there. Open flow may not be as comfortable as you think.

A big room without walls offers certain design challenges. I have seen a kitchen share the great room space without any sense of dividers. I think this arrangement makes the whole building feel like a weekend cabin rather than a home, as though the kitchen were a temporary afterthought. And, of course, you'll need to get over the concept of pushing couches and other furniture against the wall. You can start creating rooms - or rather, intimate spaces — by placing your furniture in the middle of the floor in little groupings, facing each other. Sometimes the insertion of a post or two will give you an anchor to place furniture against. But how many couches and tables do you really need? If you find yourself making lots A low ceiling over the kitchen can give the space definition, keep heat from escaping upward and use ceiling beams to enhance the log look.

-awrence photo; OPPOSITE: fotolia.com/Galyna Andrushko

of sitting rooms, perhaps you are creating useless spaces.

Also, there are times when you need quiet, and the constant activity in that big space can seem nonstop - especially when a television is involved. You will find that acoustics are incredible. I can tell you from experience that a loft makes a terrible office if you need quiet; there is no getting away from the noise.

In an open floor plan, where do you put that coat closet? Don't think you'll be happy if you leave it out; little coat pegs quickly get tiresome. Do you plan to have the main door open directly into the great

#### **LOG-HOME SITE LOCATION FAOS**

Important considerations for where a log home can be built. www.loghome.com/log-home-site-location-faqs/

room? That could be messy during bad weather days. Perhaps a fover with closet and powder room could serve as an opening to the great room.

When you add a full second floor, or even a loft, certain dynamics change. On the one hand, the upper level creates a ceiling, which helps divide the main-level spaces into rooms without adding walls. A low ceiling over the kitchen area can give it a definition all its own, especially if you build a peninsula with stools. Where will you place the staircase? In the middle of the room, it helps divide the space but takes up a lot of floor. Against the wall, you have to take headroom into consideration if you have a steep roof pitch.

What about heating and cooling? A large, high space is more difficult to heat than normal ceiling heights. Warm air rises, as you know, and the loft, if you have one, will be the warmest spot in the house. Ceiling fans do help circulation; we learned to send the air down in the winter rather than reverse the fans. which seems only to contain the warmth next to the ceiling. We thought that the warm air in the loft would find its way into our upstairs bedroom through an open doorway. No such luck. Once we pass through the door, we feel a noticeable drop in temperature.

If you are planning a second floor with bedrooms and baths, an open floor plan offers hidden design challenges. Think about what needs to go to the second floor: wiring for lights, switches, outlets, fans, hard-wired smoke detectors

and possibly skylights; plumbing for the bathroom; and supply and return ducts for HVAC. All of these necessary items require wall space to get them to the second floor. With an open floor plan, sometimes there just are not enough walls to accommodate all the stuff. It's hard to guess just how many hollow walls you will need, but we never thought about it at all and regretted it later.

Open floor plans can be an asset, but before you commit to one, think about how much space is wasted and how much could be utilized in a more productive manner. Sometimes big spaces remain undefined and are good only for walking through. Still, with some forethought, there is easily a happy medium that would work for your lifestyle.

## SITE RIGHT

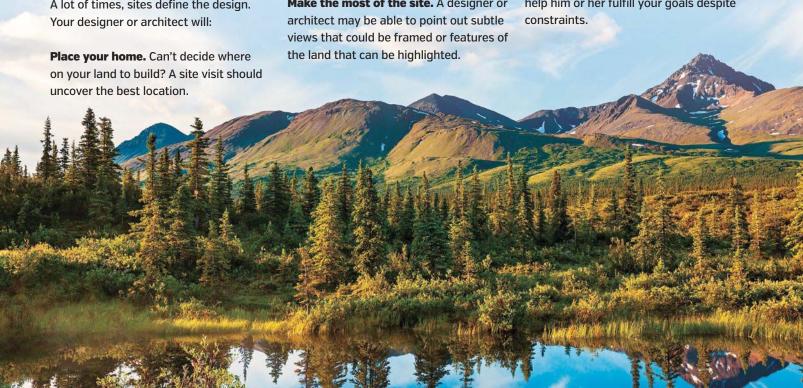
What's the big deal about a site visit? Bringing your designer or architect to your property will pay off in many ways. A lot of times, sites define the design.

See the big picture. Maybe your heart is set on a particular style of home. After seeing your property, your designer can tell you if that style will truly fit your site.

Make the most of the site. A designer or architect may be able to point out subtle views that could be framed or features of

#### Review limitations and restrictions.

Many factors - from site topography to community building restrictions - may affect your design. Giving your designer firsthand knowledge of the site could help him or her fulfill your goals despite



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## Ask Professor Rob

#### Why buy a log home?

■ There are plenty of reasons, but I got an email from someone the other day that really set things straight for me. I get lots of emails with questions about log homes that are technical in nature: How do you do this? How do you plan that? How does this work? But this email was one line, and it really hit home.

"Hey Rob, log homes are cool, tell people that."

You're right! Log homes are cool. That's why they exist and are so popular. Because log homes are so cool is the reason this magazine exists. Go ahead and search your local bookstore, you won't find a copy of "Vinyl Home Living" anywhere on the newsstand. Sports cars exist because they are cool; otherwise, we would all drive plain sedans. Log homes are the sports cars of housing.

Living the lifestyle of a log home is cool, too. Being in a beautiful setting where your home is at one with its surroundings, that's cool for sure. And having guests at your home and hearing them ohhh and ahhh about your home is a special kind of cool.

Designing, planning and getting to live in a one-of-a-kind creation that YOU (and only you) dreamed up may be one of the coolest things ever.

So dig into all the technical stuff, absorb all the info found on the pages of this magazine, and research to your hearts content. But as you delve into all those details, always remember: Log homes are cool. Enough said.

Rob Clutter conducts half-day University sessions at the Log & Timber Home Show and other locations. For a class schedule and to register, visit the website: thelogandtimber homeshow.com

Got a question for Professor Rob?



askrob@loghomeliving.com







## **Living Large**

Super-sizing a home doesn't mean just multiplying the square footage. A large home has special requirements and will consume more energy to heat and cool.

Large open spaces in a home can require special engineered wood beams or trusses to support the roof. Logs or timbers used in the roof structure will need to be larger to shoulder the load – especially in an area where snow piles up on roofs.

When rooms expand, it's more difficult for natural light from windows to penetrate the whole space. If it's not possible to add more windows, plan on installing plenty of fixtures, like recessed lights.

Taking advantage of a sloped site is a smart design move. One that allows for a walkout lower level provides considerable square footage relatively inexpensively.



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Photo depicts a 10" cabin appearance kit.

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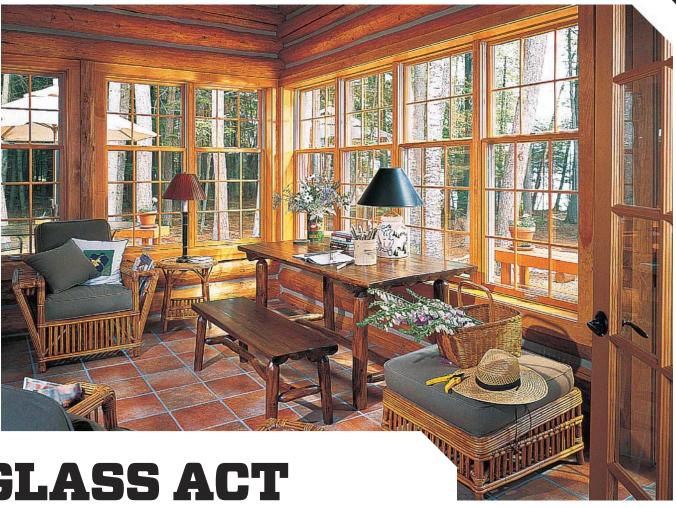
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GLASS ACT

Building a sunroom can enrich your log-home experience.

here's something endearing and timeless about a room wrapped in glass, whether you call it a sunroom, a three-season room or a four-season room. The biggest function for sunrooms is to be able to see and enjoy nature. You may design many rooms in your home to do just this, but these transparent spaces tend to have a more profound connection to the outdoors, not only through our sense of sight with a magnificent view, but also through sound and touch, whether it's the chirping of birds bustling through a stand of pines or a soft evening breeze across your face.

The conduit for this extension into earth's bounty is glass (and sometimes

lots of it). Because of this, a sunroom has different implications from rooms boxed off by log walls.

**Use of space.** First, you want to figure out how you will use your sunroom. That will help you determine its location, size and overall design. Three popular uses are as a breakfast-morning nook; as a sitting room for reading, lounging and enjoying the sun; and as a dining room. Obviously, you're not limited to these ideas. The most important consideration is how your family will best benefit from it. Just make sure you figure out this part of the equation before finalizing your floor plan. It may not be as essential as the great room, but it's also not a room A sunroom is a great way to bring light and views into your home.

to tack on at the last minute. You want to locate it advantageously in relation to not only the outdoors (and, of course, the sun), but also your home's other rooms.

**Advantageous location.** Actually, the position of your sunroom in relation to the sun is the chief consideration. After all, if you build where it will be buried in the shade, you've defeated the purpose. Worse, lack of sunlight will make the room cold and dark and not very inspiring, and while you can get very efficient insulated glass, the space is still more susceptible to the weather conditions outside. A natural location is on the warm side of the house - i.e., the south and west corners.

## **5 ESSENTIAL LOG-HOME BUILDING TIPS**



Savvy builder Jim Cooper advises how to ensure a hassle-free project. www.loghome.com/5-essential-building-tips-from-a-pro/

Consider views, too. If being able to watch the sun rise and set is tops on your list, then position the sunroom so one side faces the eastern morning sun and the other side soaks up the dazzling colors and last minutes of heat from the setting sun in the west.

Indoor-outdoor access. Another relationship to consider is how the sunroom flows with the rest of your home. Is it open to the indoor living space or closed off by French doors as its own wing? Generally, you want to be able to access the room from the kitchen, living or dining rooms, or another main part of the house. Unless it's meant to be a private space not shared by all, you don't want to locate it off of a bedroom that requires walking through. If you've decided your sunroom is going to be an open breakfast nook, then build it next to the kitchen. Going for a sitting room? Try a spot adjacent to the great room.

As a transition point from indoor to outdoor living spaces, consider hooking up the sunroom to a garden, deck or patio with an exterior door. And to make sure all of your senses are stimulated, some (or all) windows should be operable. Large sliding glass windows about 2 to 3 feet off the floor are very popular. For a charming cottage feel, try awning windows that swing out from the bottom. (These are great for wet climates because you can keep them open even during a rainfall.)

**Construction method.** Most of these rooms are constructed with glass around the outside and small timbers between window units. This is called a direct set. Large panels of glass are installed with "stoppers" on each side — the timber trim — that keep the glass in place and ultimately has the feel of a solarium. The other method would be to cut openings into logs walls and frame in normal

# ${f TIP}$

A long south-facing sunroom that opens directly into the main living areas of your home is a great way to take advantage of passive solar heat year-round.

windows. This won't be a true full-glass room, but it's a solid option for those who don't want to break up the architectural consistency of logs.

A heavy-timber roof with open beams in a cathedral ceiling is a favorite option for overhead, because it helps with consistency and makes smaller sunrooms feel more spacious. A high ceiling also offers more vertical area for glass to let in more of the view. **U** 



## **GO WITH** THE FLOW

Rooms that are open to the rest of the home get the advantage of having access to the rest of the home's heating and cooling. Standalone sunrooms may need supplemental heating in the cooler months, such as a fireplace for winter and a ceiling fan for summer.

# Don't Fear Shrinkage



ood shrinkage and the resulting settlement and movement are not problems but characteristics of working with a natural material. Shrinkage becomes a problem only when the log manufacturer, builder or homeowner fails to recognize or respect it. While it is important and under certain conditions even critical, most settlement and shrinkage concerns are more for energy efficiency, maintenance time and expense, and construction quality than for structural integrity. The basic engineering of a log home makes for a strong building that can withstand a great deal of design and construction abuse.

The important consideration isn't how to avoid settlement but how to handle it. Settlement is affected by the kind of wood used for the logs, conditions under which the trees were grown, the season when the logs were cut, the home's engineering system, the construction method, and even the type of heating and cooling system used in the home. So there isn't a single, simple answer. Engineering and building for settlement

involve preparing for a range of possible movement.

To accommodate settlement inside the house, as well as in the log walls, there must be settlement space in interior framed walls. So-called "shrinking" or "settling" walls, used by a number of log-home companies, place the weight of the second floor and roof on posts rather than bearing walls. Interior framed walls contain a space near the top that is concealed behind trim secured only to the top of the settlement space. The support posts rest on shims or adjustable jacks.

As the log walls settle, the shims are removed or the jacks are lowered. Either action lowers the center of the roof and second-floor system, keeping it aligned with the log wall. As the center lowers, the settling space, concealed behind trim, closes. Because the trim is fastened only at the top of the settling space, it isn't necessary to remove it to make adjustments. As a bonus, since there are no interior bearing walls, the house is a remodeler's dream. You can knock out and rearrange walls to your heart's content. Just don't mess with those posts.

## **What determines** the cost of logs?

Three factors influence cost: availability, species characteristics and processing. Wood is a commodity, so prices vary regionally and fluctuate frequently. Just because one company's price for a particular wood species is high, don't assume everyone else's will be, too. The wood may be harder to acquire in one company's area, or another company may have bought its current inventory when the market price was lower.

All things being equal, wood species that a producer can buy locally cost less than the same species that must be hauled a distance to the producer's location. Because species vary around the country, a wood that's common — and thus cheaper — in one area may be rare or unobtainable in another.

As you compare log-package costs from different producers, obtain quotes for different species from the same producer if possible. You might also compare costs for a specific species among several log producers. The choice of wood species can affect your bottom line cost by as much as 20 percent.





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**BRIGHT IDEAS** 

Lighting boosts a log home's interior looks, utility and comfort. By Joyce Standridge

s we move into autumn and its shorter days, the increasing hours of darkness bring our awareness to artificial light and how it can not only work for us, but also benefit us. Because wood absorbs light so well, the lighting in a log home is frequently more critical than in stick-built homes, but a strategic lighting plan can also yield greater comfort.

The pros agree. Experts with the American Lighting Association (ameri canlightingassoc.com) have studied the entire matter of efficiently and attractively lighting homes. As a result, hey have identified three types of lighting, applicable to any building: ambient, accent and task.

**Ambient light comes naturally.** The big question is whether it is harder to control. If you believe that you can't do anything about ambient — or sun-provided -lighting after the house has been built, then this article (and a little rambling around the Internet) can disabuse you of that notion. In fact, ambient lighting is far more than just what comes through the window. As the website Interior Mantra notes (interiormantra.com), ambient lighting differs from task lighting because its purpose is to provide an equal flash of light throughout a room, as opposed to concentrated light for a specific purpose.

A room that has insufficient (or even too much) light can be altered by viewing the overall design and contents. While

Logs absorb light, but strategically placed fixtures and windows can keep your home bright and cheery.

you're not likely to paint wood surfaces, a coat of color on drywall surfaces — even a just a few shades difference - can completely change how light is absorbed and reflected. Flooring types also capture or mirror the amount of light, and, of course, the furnishings' finishes and colors will impact how well the ambient lighting translates into the general presentation.

Here's the thing about ambient lighting. Unless you are talking about a panic room or a cellar with no access to lighting beyond artificial sources, the amount of light that is available at any one time can vary significantly from other times — and that is a very important matter to consider in your overall lighting scheme.

## **LOG-HOME ROOM IDEAS**



Find inspiration for your dream home's design. www.loghome.com/room-ideas/

**Accent on accent.** Accent lighting is the most fun source and allows your inner decorator to take over. To be effective, according to the American Lighting Association, accent lighting requires as least three times as much light on the focal point as the general lighting surrounding it. That makes sense, as the point of accent lighting is to draw attention to a specific space or object through track lighting or recessed can lighting, as examples. While task lighting, especially that destined for living areas, can be inventive and eye-catching in its own manner, accent lighting generally exists only to be purpose-driven. It is unusual to see accent lighting that is decorative in its own right. These lights exist to serve, not to draw attention.

If you plan to change the focus of the room, invest in moveable accent lighting. But since most accent light fixtures will be in the ceiling or in a solidly attached sconce, it requires careful thought and planning to properly light and display an area.

Taking light to task. Task lighting is the workhorse of household illumination. Like oats or hay for the horse, task lighting used to be strictly utilitarian. Location was far more important than appearance. Happily, that's no longer the case. It's possible to work beautifully, in every sense of the word. Whether it's a fixture (meaning it either cannot be moved or has limited motion) or a lamp, designing task lighting for kitchens and offices offers such a wide range of options that you'll never again misread the salt for sugar. Or put too many zeroes on a check.

Being practical as well as decorative,

task lighting should avoid glare and provide enough illumination to prevent eyestrain, especially for reading areas. And although the terminology sounds less than glamorous, it's within the task-lighting realm that many of the exciting, boundarytesting fixtures and lamps are found.

Often, we think of task lighting as being portable. Most lamps fit into this category, but task lighting can also be a fixture. A chandelier over the dining table, a pool table or even in a foyer (to light the way in - a most-important task), has value as task lighting. So, too, are lights that work in the bathroom or as lovely pendants over a sink.

Working with this lighting trio, you have ample opportunity to light your log home for maximum benefit. Whatever your need, you'll find lighting fixtures and lamps to assist in the deed. U

## ADD STYLE TO YOUR KITCHEN

Kitchens often challenge styleconscious log-home owners. How do you deal with logs and openness?

1. COORDINATE THE LOOK. Cabinets dominate most kitchens, followed by countertops, floors, walls, windows, lighting and miscellaneous embellishments. Cabinets rank high in a log-home kitchen, too, but not above the logs. Logs typically show themselves in the walls and ceiling.

Different log styles and shapes influence and reinforce the look. Flat, milled logs establish finely finished, contemporary or traditional looks. Big, full-round, handcrafted logs convey ruggedness and rusticity.

2. CONSIDER NON-LOG WALLS. If there's one room to downplay the logs, it's the

kitchen. Some people favor the more familiar drywall look. Others welcome a change from logs that dominate other rooms.

Stud-framed interior walls allow a variety of finishes and colors. Framed partition walls easily handle wires and pipes and ducts. And, although there's no trick to hanging flat-backed cabinets on a round-log wall, you may prefer a surface that offers more versatility.

If you choose drywall, you may add log character posts and beams that imply or actually define the kitchen boundary, such as by forming a low ceiling to support a loft over a kitchen located next to a great room with a tall ceiling.

If you have a wall log or two that has some beauty spot on one side, face it into your kitchen to add character to its supporting role. Another option is to extend a wall log or wall section, flatten the top log surface and use it as a built-in shelf.

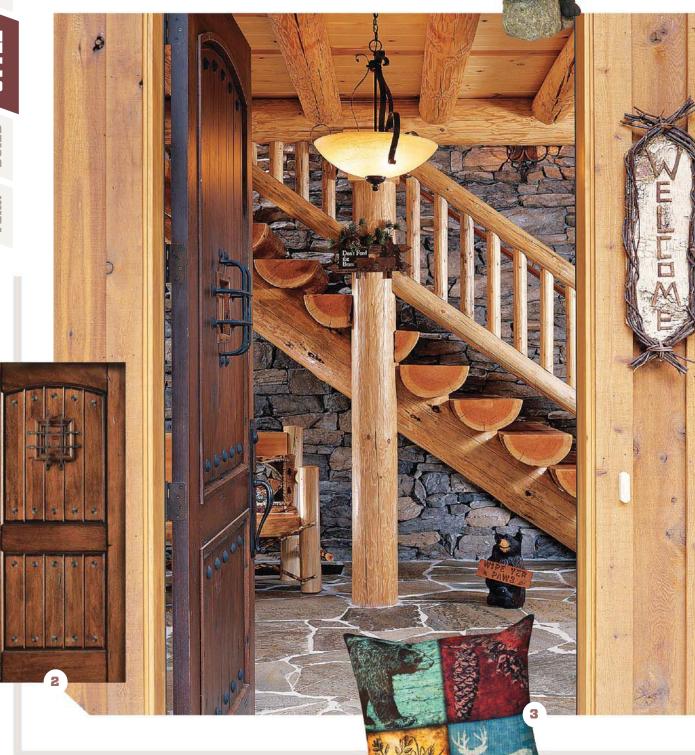
3. LOOK UP. Barely noticed in ordinary homes, ceilings can enrich a log-home kitchen. Low ceilings often feature log beams, even if no wall logs show, sometimes with hanging fixtures. High ceilings might showcase log rafters, tongue-andgroove boards or big-timber trusses.

4. ADD OTHER WOOD. Log-home kitchens inspire two directions for other materials: ones that complement wood or the more wood the merrier. The result is wood cabinets, wood floors and countertops, and wood-trimmed windows. Besides nonstructural logs that enrich the look, some homeowners use whole or half-logs for the base of islands and peninsulas.

## Steal This Look

# **Grand Entrance**

Make your first impression count with a welcoming entryway like this one. By Edie Mann



Wipe

Yer Paws

ames Ray Spahn photo







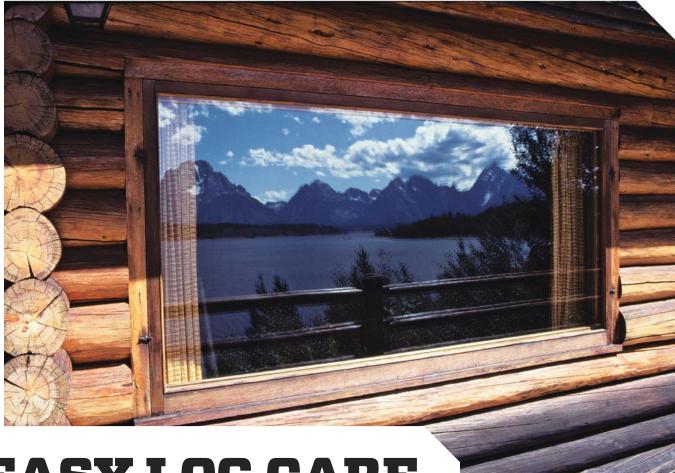
1. 12" x 19" "Wipe Yer Paws" sculpture, \$38.99 (americanexpedition.us). 2.36" x 80" solid wood, rustic Mahogany-type, prefinished/ distressed, V-groove, speakeasy front door slab, \$1,108 (homedepot.com). 3.18" bear-and-deer inspired Quad Image throw pillow, \$38.99 (walmart.com). 4. Aspen 25" pendent [sic] in "Pine Tree" finish, \$598 (cabin9design.com). 5.8" x 26" vertical birch bark & twig welcome sign, \$21 (cottagesurroundings.com). 6.3-D "Good Fishing Bear" metal wall art, \$129.99 (american expedition.us). 7. Handcrafted cedar log bench with back and armrests, \$830.00 (ncrustic.com).







BUILD



**EASY LOG CARE** 

3 steps to prepare your home for the long winter ahead. By Jim Cooper

all is the best time for some of the routine maintenance that keeps a log home sound, solid and looking good. Sunlight and water are logs' greatest enemies. They're constantly attacking wood, degrading finishes and breaking down seals and coatings. In addition, the wear and tear of constant use attacks mechanical equipment and appliances. Setting aside a weekend or two before winter sets in can keep all of these threats to your comfort and pocketbook at bay.

Here are three steps that you can take this fall to maintain your log home in top condition.

**Take a walk.** Circle your log home and inspect its finish and seals. Your logs should still have most of the color you originally applied. If you used a clear finish, the wood should still have its natural luster. Logs that have turned black or dingy gray have lost their protective finish, exposing the wood to degrading ultraviolet light and moisture.

Pay special attention to logs and wood trim close to the ground. Splashing from heavy downpours or constant soaking from last winter's melting snow make these areas especially susceptible to wood damage and rot.

While you are examining the logs, look at the seals between them. Caulking

Logs are visible, so it's easy to spot any warning signs of damage.

EFT & OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Cindy Thiede

and chinking both eventually feel the effects of weather and start to break down. Stretched or torn seals that can result from wood movement or shrinkage create openings for water and insects. Touch up damaged spots with a caulk gun. For larger areas, use a utility knife to remove the old caulk and replace it with fresh.

Inspect gutters and eaves for discoloration indicating that water has lingered there too long. Use a ladder to check rain gutters for leaves and debris. Make sure downspouts are clear and that there is a means to disperse water at the bottom to avoid erosion where the water emerges.

Check chimneys to make sure screens are clear and rain caps are in place. Clear

#### **LOG-HOME MAINTENANCE FAOS**



Answered by Log Home Living's own editor, Roland Sweet. www.loghome.com/log-home-maintenance-faqs/

out wasp or bird nests you may have picked up over the summer.

Break out the garden hose. Sometimes you can't tell from the color and condition of dry logs whether the finish is in good shape. Spray a large area of logs, using a hose equipped with a shower-type nozzle. If the water beads or runs off in little rivulets, your finish is still working. If the soaking leaves patches of darker damp wood, it's time to re-treat the logs.

Check areas that seem to be soaking up water by trying to press a nail or screwdriver into them. If the nail or tool sinks in, clean out the punky wood and fill the void with an epoxy wood filler. Don't put this task off because it is a sign wood rot has already set in.

Finally, flush gutters and downspouts to make sure they drain freely.

If you live in a dusty area, you may want to finish brightening up your logs by power washing them or giving them a brisk rinse with an ordinary garden hose. If using a power washer, be careful not to gouge the surface with too much water pressure.

Clear passageways. Check kitchen, bath and dryer ducts. Clear out any lint or bird nests that you find. Change your furnace filter and clean your fireplace flue or call in a chimney sweep.

Now you're all set to light a fire and settle back to enjoy the rest of autumn and the coming winter.

Jim Cooper, a former log-home builder and general contractor, is author of Log Homes Made Easy and The Log Home Project Planner. He is a LEED Accredited Professional and Certified Passive House Consultant. U

# **Warning Signs**

Your goal is to protect your home from moisture infiltration, air infiltration and heat loss. Here are some things to look for while inspecting your log walls.

Open cracks. Cracks (checks) in outside logs, particularly upward facing ones 1/2-inch and wider on walls without adequate overhangs protecting them from rain should be properly filled. Install a tightly fitted piece of foam backing (available in thicknesses ranging from 1/4-inch up to several inches. Push the foam backing down approximately 3/8inch below the surface of the log to allow the thickness of the filler. It can then be troweled with a 3/4-inch-wide chinking knife to provide for a neat and proper sealing of the check.

Water stains. A good wood cleaner can help remove watermarks, particularly on unstained wood, as long as they're on top of the stain and not embedded in or under it on bare wood. More important is to find out where the water is coming from and resolve the source so no long-term water infiltration leads to potentially damaging rot.

**Faded finish.** The sun degrading the stain and the top wood fibers of the log causes faded finish. If it appears you have no stain left on areas of the logs, this is an indication that it's been several years since the original stain, or any subsequent touch up, has been done. The degraded area of the log can be pressure washed, sanded or buffed (with an Osborn brush) to help remove the top microscopic layer of wood, which will also help remove mold, mildew, the sunburnt surface or other topical contaminants. After allowing ample time to dry, if pressure washed, which varies tremendously depending on temperature and humidity, new stain can be applied where needed to help blend in to give your log home a protected, appealing appearance.







# Log Fix-Its: DIY or Pro?

Il homes suffer damage of one kind or another. Log homes are no different. Some repairs you can do yourself. Others will need an expert.

#### **Accidental Damage**

You may accidentally mar the surface of your wall. Many homeowners decide it's just a "character feature" and let it be. If you decide to fix it, you have several options.

For a small indentation or impression, try swelling it out again by holding a wet, hot washcloth on it for a minute or two. The hot water will cause the wood fibers to expand to their original shape. Cabinet-makers use this technique to eliminate "hammer blossoms."

If a chip is knocked out, glue it back in or sand and refinish where the chip came from. Both repairs have their challenges. If you glue the chip in, Elmer's glue works just fine. Use a thin film of glue and wipe away the excess.

Apply pressure until the glue is dry - about 24 hours later – to ensure that the glue enters the cellular structure of the wood; otherwise, the adhesion will be weak. With small chips, apply pressure with masking tape and gently remove it when the glue is dry. Larger work may need some sort of slanted board pressing against it for a day. If you need to, gently sand at the edges of the repair with 80-grit sandpaper

#### **Exterior Structural Damage**

If something strikes or falls against exterior logs, they might need to be replaced. Such a repair is not outside the scope of a reasonably handy owner, but it's a big job.

First, get replacement logs from the company that milled the originals. If you don't know the company, try local sawmills or a specialty log-home repair company. Then you need a heavy-duty reciprocating saw to cut the damaged portion away.

You might also need metal-cutting blades to cut through any spikes or bolts that held the old log in place. If the damage is wide or high enough, the wall might have to be jacked up while work is under way. This task is generally best left to professionals. Once the damaged log sections are out, install the new log sections and toenail them into position.

#### **Insect Damage**

Although termites and carpenter ants are found throughout the United States, properly treated and maintained logs aren't vulnerable to the damage they







Neglect rarely leads to rot, but when it does, repairs proceed quickly because all the wood is exposed. Here the rot is dug out and any metal fasteners are removed. The remaining wood is smoothed with wood epoxy and the new log pieces are positioned.

piles of sawdust below the holes insects bore. Termites and carpenter ants like wood that is moist. If you find insect damage, look for underlying causes of moisture and eliminate it. You shouldn't have any further insect problem.

You can plug insect holes with insecticide. You can pour in borates or insert borate plugs. Borates are nontoxic to humans and are widely available from loghome maintenance companies.

# Randy the Handyman

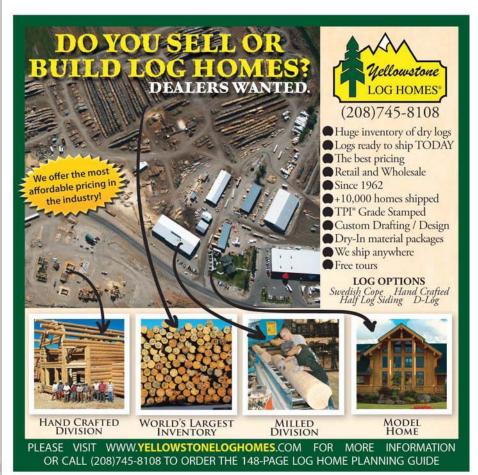
What's the biggest challenge to furnishing a log home?

Probably scale. Log-home interiors typically have more interior openness, resulting in spaces flowing into each other, and overhead volume, which can be exaggerated by floor-to-ceiling chimneys and roof trusses. In addition, wall logs, especially big round ones, impose themselves visually and physically inside rooms, especially in homes that use logs for partition walls. These traits are difficult for someone unaccustomed to log homes to deal with when it comes to furniture. Also, many homeowners figure since they just spent all their money on the building, they'll furnish it with their old pieces and worry about new furniture down the road. The result is the furniture seems dwarfed by the volume and can look anywhere from merely misplaced to downright preposterous.

Got a question for Randy the Handyman?









# NATURALLY INSPIRED

The only thing log-home lovers love more than wood is more wood. And why not? It's a natural, renewable material that's both durable and beautiful. So why not furnish your wood home with creations inspired by nature. Here are some starters.

## **Bunk Mate**

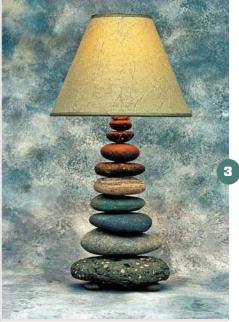
Handcrafted bunk bed with integrated ladder provides easy access to the top bunk. Available in a variety of configurations and finishes, from \$4,200 (lalunecollection.com; 414.263.5300).



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- 1. Great Lodge Fan, 52", \$482.40, from Monte Carlo (montecarlofanlights.com).
- 2. Mosaic-Style Birch Bark Desk, \$4,995 as shown (woodlandcreek furniture.com; 231-668-9125).
- 3. Big Kahuna Lamp, crafted from Lake Superior stone, 24" lamp w/9" shade (superiorlightsource.com).
- 4. Decorative animal track tiles, 6" x 6" \$25 each (terrapintile.com; 970-402-5067).
- 5. Old West Cody Chair, \$1,699 (maplesleather.com; 866-561-5858).





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| COMPANY PAGE                              |
|---|
| A & L Paint                               |
| A Plus Modular Log Homes LLC81            |
| Appalachian Log Homes46                   |
| Better than Logs78                        |
| Boone Custom Forest Products78            |
| Coventry Log Homes                        |
| Eagle Panel Systems Inc                   |
| Estemerwalt Log Homes48                   |
| Golden Eagle Log Homes                    |
| Hiawatha Log Homes49                      |
| Hochstetler Milling 58                    |
| Honest Abe Log Homes Inc                  |
| Johnson's Log Home & Timber Frame Shows83 |
| Kalaty Rugs Inside Back Cover             |

| COMPANY PAGE                             |
|--|
| Katahdin Cedar Log Homes3                |
| Koski Log Homes83                        |
| Liberty Log Cabins51                     |
| Log Home Outfitters 80                   |
| Log Home Outlet                          |
| Log Investors Inc11                      |
| The Log & Timber Home Show & University  |
| Lok-N-Logs                               |
| MossCreek                                |
| The Original Log Cabin Homes             |
| Perma-Chink Systems19                    |
| PrecisionCraft Log & Timber Homes 21, 54 |
| Real Log Homes                           |

| COMPANY PAGE                          |
|---------------------------------------|
| Research Products71                   |
| Sashco Inc                            |
| Satterwhite Log Homes1                |
| Schroeder Log Home Supply71           |
| Sierra Log Homes79                    |
| Southland Log HomesInside Front Cover |
| StoneMill Log & Timber Homes55        |
| Timberhaven Log & Timber Homes 56     |
| The Unico System5                     |
| WB Fowler                             |
| Wisconsin Log Homes57                 |
| WOODGuard                             |
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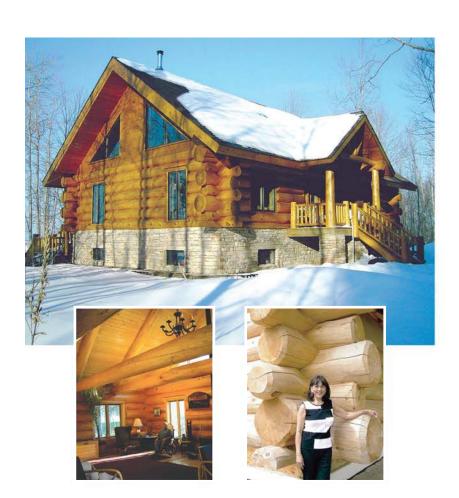
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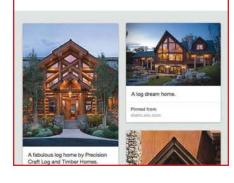
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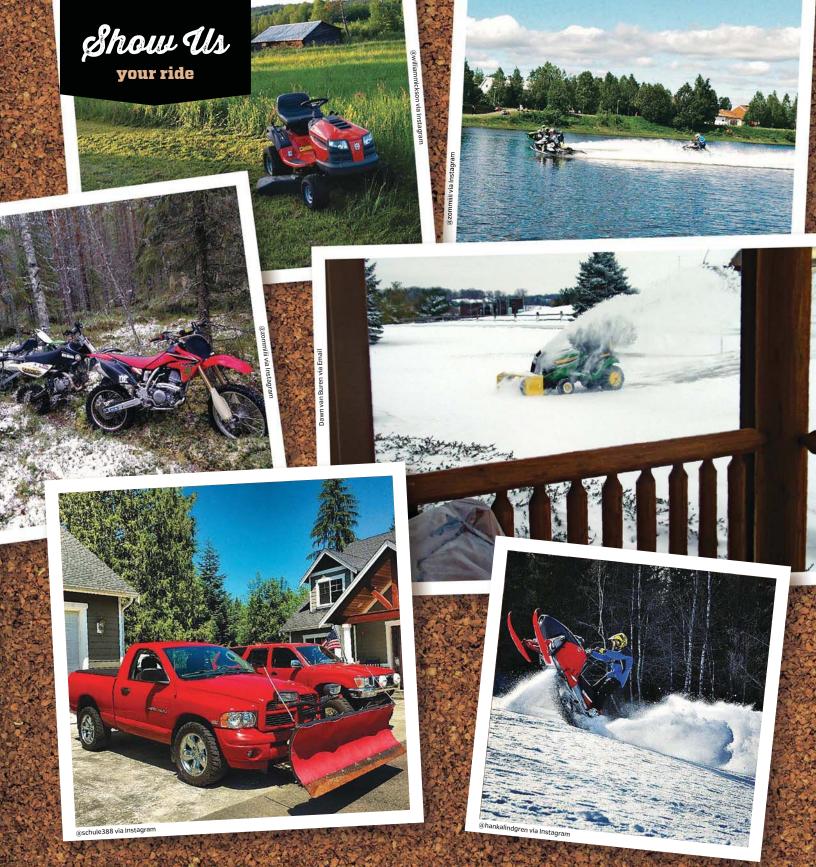












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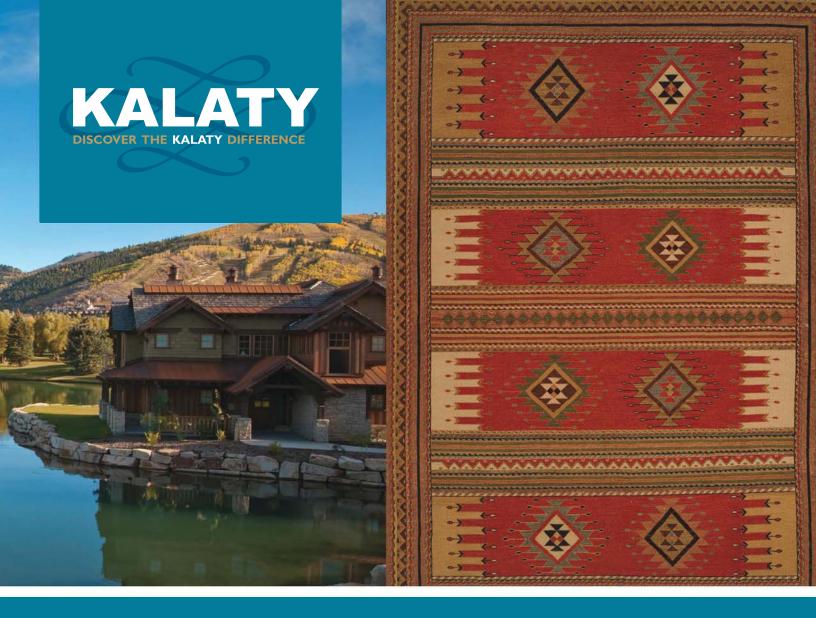
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